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TEACHING FILM

by George Kuchar



Teaching is a very rewarding experience because you get one month off for Christmas and almost a four month vacation during the summer. Also, some of the students will invite you over for dinner and some of them make excellent chefs. As the semester progresses you will make friends with your students. This is vitally important because between paychecks you're going to have to bum money off somebody! Never just ask for sixty cents or bus fare; hit them for at least ten dollars... it's less humiliating.

You can make friends with your fellow faculty if you enjoy the company of jealous, vindictive people. If you do, make sure the individual has a nice home and opens it frequently to beer saturated frolics involving fried chicken and stewed colleagues.

Teaching filmmaking at a large university or art college is a valuable interchange between teacher and pupil: You get a second chance at youth by feeding off the effervescence of the

hell raising horde, sucking their energy with the fangs of an academic Dracula while they try to nail you in a coffin of drug addiction and teenie-bopper perversions. You as the instructor, may find that you communicate best with these young people while in a drugged state. It may be the only time all of you finally connect intellectually. As this interchange takes place, it is important that the dean or president of the school not walk in unannounced. These individuals are usually alcoholics and abhor drugs.

Never look at who you are lecturing to as all those yawning mouths and isolated doodlers can be very detrimental to the natural progression of your words. If you are lucky enough to wear eyeglasses... take them off. If not, coat a pair of sunglasses with a double layer of petroleum jelly.

Never prepare lessons in advance. It is very boring and you begin to feel like a broken record. Just come with a big shopping

bag full of educational items such as film cleaner, types of movie film, various lengths of extension cords, etc. What with commercial television and the steady diet of rapid-fire imagery, the modern student is supposed to have a very short attention span. . . so it might help to pull out the items at a fairly rapid clip. If you pace yourself using Ronald McDonald (the popular hamburger clown) as your kinetic model, you'll develop an attention-riveting style.

Be sure to eat a heavy breakfast before entering the classroom and eat this breakfast out because if you start cooking at home you are going to be late. Never eat in a breakfast place that is frequented by your students because the shop talk that will undoubtedly ensue is sure to cause the Spanish omelette to lodge painfully in the chest. Indigestion is one of the greatest hazards in teaching. On days when you must attend school, be prepared to order carbonated beverages with every meal as the gas tends to break-up food block-

age. Another wonderful thing about teaching is that you can dispense with prunes as the experience itself is an excellent laxative. Arriving to school early insures privacy in the public restroom when the need to evacuate the bowels becomes imminent. The students don't enjoy hearing their teacher evacuate noisily as the memory of the event tends to interfere with the students' concentration during lectures.

Try to teach in a darkened classroom or one in which there are no windows. This is not only advantageous when screening films but is comforting during periods in which you must face the young people. The instructor should have pockets of shadowed areas in which he or she can retreat and the students need a source of lighting that won't bring all those pimples into three dimensional relief. Therefore, discourage note-taking unless they purchase those special pens that have built-in flashlights.

Allow smoking in the class even though you might be trying to kick the habit yourself. Personal vices of all kinds should be encouraged because of their eventual deadening effect on the brain. This will leave you with complete control of the group a lot sooner and elevate your position to that of the much maligned zombie masters of Haiti.

If there is one thing that you must not be without during the teaching experience... it is the breath mint. Do not underestimate this tiny, potent, miracle worker. Words of wisdom fall on deaf ears when those words issue from an orifice worthy of septic tank status.

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Dear Jeffrey:

Best of luck on your far-sighted plans for the future. Having seen the hardwork you put into your films I know that you love that medium and are not out to destroy it. It has destroyed you.

As a previous victim of celluloid abuse, I salute your march into the digital decades ahead. The founding fathers of this filmic tradition are either dead or dead and still walking. The stench of vinegar dessicates their edge-numbered droppings. Their temples to cinematic exposition reek of funeral fumes. The young Canyon classics. They now come to eat us... the so-called master chefs. I go gladly to the banquet table and hope that you rosy-cheeked, young people carve us up with the most technically advanced utensils. I go in peace by piece. Farewell for I must get back to editing my latest video so that I may have leisure ^{one} in the days ahead to manipulate the CD-i, interactive player.

P.S. and B.S.:

The true motivating powers of madness and perversity have been replaced by correctness and croissants! God have mercy on us all!

Best wishes,

George Kuchar